Guattari's Therapeutics: From Transference to Transversality

Transversality is a key term in the work of Félix Guattari. As a conceptual and pragmatic motor for the generation of heterogeneity, it extends throughout all of his work, including the writing he undertook with Deleuze. It promotes the rupture and redistribution of hierarchical structures, the promotion of operations of deterritorialisation across the social and cultural field, and it gains a 'chaosmic' dimension in the later writings (Guattari 2011: 26). Its 'origins' (my punctuation withdrawing from too categorical a subscription to this term), however, are to be found in Guattari's early work at the Clinique de la Borde and in militant Marxist movements in the 1950s and early 1960s. Indeed the first consecration of the term transversality comes in the early to mid-1960s in work clustered around Guattari's involvement in institutional psychotherapy (IP), with the *Groupe de travail de psychothérapie et de sociothérapie institutionelle* (GTPSI) and around the printed context of the first issue of the *Revue de psychothérapie institutionelle* (RDPI1) in 1964. It is on this limited context that I will focus in this essay, in an initial and necessarily provisional effort to embed the concept in a social and therapeutic pragmatics and thus counter a debateable tendency towards a dilution or diffusion of transversality in theoretical abstraction, where it risks becoming a synonym for a generalised sense of creative differentiation. My account will proceed through three sections, beginning first with an overview of the place of the concept in Guattari's work and its connections to that of Deleuze, moving then to a discussion of the relation of transversality to the psychoanalytic concept of transference, before finally addressing Guattari's mobilisation of transversality in its relevance across the social and political arena.

I. Transversality: Fortunes of the Concept

Transversality appears as the critical 'supplement' to psychoanalysis in the title of Guattari's first book publication in 1972, *Psychoanalysis and Transversality*, prefaced by Deleuze; the *supplement*, that is, which is both inherent to and excessive with regard to that which it supplements, psychoanalysis. In the 'Index of Principal Themes' at the end of the French edition of the book Guattari draws further attention to the importance of this term in the evolution of his work. He points to the fact that a number of the themes and concepts elaborated in the articles and diverse texts that make up the volume, including transversality, have gained a certain currency (Guattari 2003a: 289).[1] He would not wish, Guattari says, to stamp a personal claim on this necessarily collective work, but there is nevertheless scope for certain precisions; he points here to the importance of the essay 'Transversality' published in the FIRST issue of the *Revue de psychothérapie institutionelle* in 1964, adding the capitals to underline the inaugural status of the piece. Guattari thus anchors the global movement of his early ideas around this key text and concept, and situates it precisely in chronological terms. For his part, in the preface, 'Three Group Problems', Deleuze lists the 'concept of transversality' among the 'proper contribution' (*l'apport propre*) of Guattari to institutional psychotherapy and a means through which it opens out into 'institutional analysis'; Deleuze ties it in, moreover, to a further contribution specific to Guattari, the distinction between two sorts of groups: the subjected or dependent group (*groupe assujetti*) and the group-subject (*le groupe-sujet)* which as we will see is crucial to the notion of transversality as such (Deleuze 2015a: 19). In an earlier letter to Guattari on May 1969, moreover, Deleuze had underlined the significance of transversality as among the 'complex and important concepts' emerging from Guattari's as yet uncollected writings (Deleuze 2015b: 35). In later interviews, and

with the benefit of hindsight, Guattari points to the 'complete change' which the 'miracle' of his encounter with Deleuze wrought upon the concept of transversality (see Alliez and Goffey 2015: 9). Two versions of transversality emerge here, on either side of Guattari's encounter with Deleuze: first, a notion of transversality as a generator of expressive mobility and exchange among individuals in psychiatric institutions, a therapeutic aim which is nevertheless engaged with social critique and struggle. Second, a notion of transversality as generative of heterogeneous flux at the level of the partial object, 'below' the category of the subject or individual. Transversality, in other words, is the therapeutic and existential precursor to the rhizome and to schizoanalysis.

The concept of transversality in fact comprises a cluster of related arguments which draw on Guattari's experience at La Borde, but also as a militant working with such groups as *La Voie communiste*. It is embedded both in a theoretical and critical engagement with psychoanalysis, both Freudian and Lacanian, with Sartre's theories of groups, and, albeit less explicitly, with a structural anthropology in which Marcel Mauss' account of social exchange is mediated through Claude Lévi-Strauss' emphasis on system and structure (in tension with Guattari's later use of and reference to anthropological work, significantly the influence of Pierre Clastres).[2] The 'original' conception of transversality as such has been 'claimed' by other colleagues of Guattari at La Borde, specifically Ginette Michaud (on whom more later) and Jean-Claude Polack, but this is perhaps merely indicative of how the notion emerges out of the collective organisational practice and everyday life at La Borde.[3]

If transversality emerges out of a critique of the baseline psychoanalytic concept of transference, and pertains in its initial conception to a radical reconfiguration of the organisation of groups within the context of institutions, it will subsequently be incorporated as part of the general vocabulary and orientation of *Anti-Œdipus* and *A Thousand Plateaux*, without much in the way of direct reference to its original clinical and institutional usage. Julian Bourg refers to Guattari's essay as the 'ur-text of *Anti-Oedipus*'; this is instructive to some degree and does capture the basic premise of Guattari's critical rejection of the isolation of the problematics of psychosis from the social field, but perhaps overstates the case and correspondingly understates the thematic and conceptual distance between the essay, 'Transversality' and the book *Anti-Œdipus* (Bourg 2007: 139). Arguably more pertinent is an early adoption of the term by Deleuze, in a later chapter of *Proust and Signs*, added to the original 1964 edition after Deleuze's encounter with Guattari and with his work. Deleuze connects the term to an expression in Proust's novel, where the narrator reflects on the 'transversal' lines connecting the Guermantes and Méseglise ways, two countryside walks originating from his family's summer house in Combray. Having argued, with reference to Leibniz, that the Proustian cosmogony is made of non-unifiable fragments or 'non-communicating' vessels, Deleuze asks what then makes for the strange unity of the novel itself (Deleuze 2003b: 163). Transversality provides the solution:

> It is transversality that permits us, in the train [reference here to the narrator's account of different viewpoints on the landscape while on a train approaching Combray], not to unify the viewpoints of a landscape, but to bring them into communication according to the landscape's own dimensions. It is

> transversality that constitutes the singular unity and totality of the Méséglise Way and the Guermantes Way, without suppressing their difference and their distance; 'between these routes certain transversals were established' (Proust, III, 1029). (168)

Here Deleuze cites from the closing part of Proust's *Time Regained*, where, at the end of the novel, the narrator has been prompted to meditate on the connecting lines between the separate elements of his experience. In support of his use of the concept of transversality, Deleuze adds a footnote to the effect that:

> In relation to psychoanalytic investigations Félix Guattari has formed a very rich concept of transversality to account for communications and relations of the unconscious; see 'La Transversalité' in *Psychothérapie institutionelle,* 1. (168)

In Deleuze's rendering, Proustian transversality is a mode of connection which is not unitary or unifying; it connects fragments or partial objects without subjecting them to a sovereign principle and without subsuming them in a homogenising thematic. Although the parallel – between Proust's novel and institutional psychotherapy – may be surprising, it brings into the relief the underlying sense of transversality as a mode of non-unifying connectivity or communication which operates in both domains, a machine for connectivity, as it were, which also connects the separate work of Deleuze and Guattari. If the entry under 'Transversality' in Adrian Parr's *The Deleuze Dictionary* is flawed through the omission of any reference to Guattari, it is nevertheless useful in connecting the term to the idea of the 'literary machine', since

this captures the sense of the 'machinic', permutational generation of non-unifying connections that is at stake in both Proust's novel and the institutional setting (see Parr 2010: 291-92).

II. Transference and Transversality in Institutional Psychotherapy

If we now move back a few years in the micro-chronology of concepts I am seeking to work through here, we will see how the concept of transversality emerges initially from within the context of a concerted focus among the proponents of institutional psychotherapy, and specifically the GTPSI on the problem of transference. The GTPSI had been established in 1960 as a forum for the discussion of ideas and practices among the adherents of institutional psychotherapy, and included among its key participants François Tosquelles, Jean Oury, Guattari himself, the Belgian psychoanalyst (and colleague of Lacan) Jacques Schotte, among many other IP practitioners at La Borde and other clinics. It is this same constituency which forms the collective authorship of the first issue of the *Revue de psychothérapie institutionelle* of 1964, which features 15 essays on transference, including Guattari's 'La Transversalité'. These were originally the papers presented at a round table convened by Tosquelles and Paul Sivadon at the 1964 international conference on *Psychodrama*, the first of its kind, held in Paris. In his introduction, despite what he calls the 'co-habitation' of psychodrama and IP, Tosquelles nevertheless marks out the distinction of the institutional psychotherapy tendency from this emerging psychoanalytic tendency, pioneered by Jacob L. Moreno, which gained momentum in the 1960s (see Tosquelles 1964a: 5).[4] The 1964 round-table thus appears as a Trojan horse of a sort within the psychodrama conference, focused on what Tosquelles

describes as ‘the substantial problem of transference and counter-transference in institutional psychotherapy’ (5).

Transference is of course one of the cornerstones of Freudian psychoanalysis, and a specific challenge for the participants of institutional psychotherapy, where its very possibility is at stake. The question is this: can transference, as it is conceived to operate within the psychoanalytic session, that is in the apparently ‘dual’ relation between analyst and analysand, work within the context of the group and the institution? For Guattari, in the short ‘exposé to the GTPSI’ on ‘Transference’, also included in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality,* it is the reference to Lacan and the emphasis placed on speech and language in the transferential relation which can allow us to think transference at the level of the institution (Guattari 2015b: 76). The Lacanian emphasis on the operation of transference through speech enables, in a broader sense, an avoidance of the potentially vague thematics of affect, empathy and projection which might otherwise constrain psychoanalysis within the limited framework of the dyadic couple of the therapist and patient, and it also potentially avoids a collapsing back of group and institutional relations onto modes of familialism, thus prefiguring the later anti-œdipal project of Guattari and Deleuze. The institutional setting thus emerges as a structured space, susceptible to being experimented or ‘cut’ in different ways, rather than being construed on the model of archaic myths or the normative family. The whole schema of transference thus needs to be rethought at the institutional level, outside and beyond the individualised setting of the room and the couch, entailing the identification of the group as subject (rather than the group as a collection of serial subjectivities), the desire of the group, and the institutional object, or the institution as object.

Most of the contributions to the first issue of RDPI1 and, one assumes, to the round-table of 1964 thus revolve around the 'problem' of transference at the level of the group and in the institution. As many of the contributors assert, the very existence and condition of possibility of IP hinges on the capacity to modify and instigate the transferential and counter-transferential relation within the institutional setting. If the institution is to be anything other than a 'liveable' environment and a corrective to the negative paradigm of the internment camp or 'concentrationary straightjacket' (*carcan*) (Tosquelles 1964b: 13), if it is to operate as a 'therapeutic motor' (13), it must be on the basis of a thorough understanding of the psychoanalytic concept of transference, but also of its necessary adaptation in the collective setting of the institution.

There are two key requirements for this theoretical work, as described in many of the articles in the first issue of RDPI1: the first is a thorough engagement (particularly in the article by Schotte), with Freud's use of and reflection on transference as a shibboleth for psychoanalysis as such (see Schotte 1964: 40). In Schotte's reading, the ambivalence of Freud's German term for transference, *übertragung*, is crucial, and indicative of Freud's studied use of language (44). *Übertragung* evokes both the relation of the patient to their environment in the general sense, and the more specific meaning of an 'agreement' or a 'contract' (48). This translates into two emphases: first on the embeddedness (according to Schotte) of transference in an existential questioning of the human, the sense that psychoanalysis pursues 'man' (the human) as a question (55). Thus the many references, on Schotte's part, at least, to Heidegger and to the issue of 'this *Dasein* which in the human is more originary than the human'

(55). Of equal importance, however, is the second aspect of the sense of *übertragung* – the notion of contract or agreement, and thus its operation in the field of speech (*le champ de la parole*); thus the recurrent references to Lacan, whose seminar on transference we might recall had been given three years previously in 1960-61 (42).[5] The key point to emphasise here once more is that the baseline proposition of the operation of transference in the field of speech enables a firm displacement both of the idea of transference as a necessarily 'dual' relationship (of analyst to analysand), since both are situated in relation to the structure of language, 'structured like a language' to use the common Lacanian formula, and a displacement and rejection moreover of ostensibly affective ideas around empathy and projection.

The second major strand of the work of the GTPSI on transference concerns a concerted enquiry into the nature and structure of the institution as such.
The second essay in the issue, written collectively by a team from La Verrière led by the pioneer of 'class-therapy' Paul Sivadon, on 'Institutional Counter-Transference' engages with the definition of the institution, and points, somewhat surprisingly, to an early text by Deleuze, prior to any contact between Deleuze and Guattari, the introduction to a short textbook anthology on 'Instincts and Institutions' in a collection directed by Georges Canguilhem (see Chanoit et al 1964: 26). Deleuze argues there that instinct and institution are both 'procedures of satisfaction' which relate to originary tendencies or drives (Deleuze 2002: 19). Whereas instincts aim to satisfy drives directly and immediately, institutions mediate between the drives and the exterior world, the 'instituting' of an 'original world' between the human and the exterior world and a transformation of the drive itself through its submission to a new milieu (19). This recognition of the 'instituting' and mediating function of the

institution is crucial for Guattari's formulation of transversality. However, in the Sivadon group's essay Deleuze's account is contrasted and linked to the 'transcendental' sociological tendency of Durkheim, and it is this anthropological reference which dominates in the essays in RDPI1, particularly in Ginette Michaud's 'Transference and Exchange in Institutional Therapeutics', which moves ever closer to Guattari's conception of transversality.

Michaud's 1958 DES thesis at the Sorbonne, on 'The Institution in light of the Theory of Groups' is a underpinning reference across the GTPSI's work, and unsurprisingly Michaud's own contribution to RDPI1 focuses on the question of exchange: 'It seems true to me that it is through the material organisation of all the forms of exchange that one can approach the function and meaning of the institution' (Michaud 1964: 119). Working with a framework influenced by Durkheimian sociology and especially the work of Mauss, Michaud foregrounds the importance of exchange for the understanding of the internal dynamics of institutions. Exchange as such is valorised as a therapeutic function, and as a result 'it is necessary that the collective put in place instruments in which this dimension [that of exchange] is implicated in the very existence of the collective' (119). In order that the institution and the groups within it do not become 'sedimented' and 'ritualised' there must, Michaud argues, be a factor of 'social reality' which is present, albeit unconsciously, as an 'alienating pressure' (119). Michaud thus describes a scenario in which the functional role of the institution, as a space and structure of exchange, nevertheless open to the 'pressure' of external reality, is foregrounded. The understanding of the function of exchange, in this context, is not, however, modelled on the 'market economy' but on that of 'obligatory exchanges': 'We must articulate exchange and transference on the basis of notions

which are the most aligned with forced exchanges, with what Mauss calls the "*mana* of the exchanged thing"' (123). If, in anthropological contexts, *mana* pertains to the spiritual force of prestige which both underpins and drives social structures and exchanges, Michaud aligns it with the notion of obligation, with 'what obliges' (*ce qui oblige*) and thus with the 'alienating pressure' exerted on the institution or the group from outside (121). 'What obliges' in a social structure can be conceived of as the threat of God's vengeance, for example, or the symbolic fear of castration and the related instance of a superego, but in essence it is the social demand as such, the need for a sociality. The instance of obligation nevertheless needs to be there in order to instigate exchange and to avoid inertia and the death drive. For Michaud, then, transference needs to be thought in relation to this conception of exchange, as a form of implicit and unconscious 'obligation' to exchange. But the account also needs to be supplemented, in Michaud's view, by an awareness of the asymmetrical nature of exchange as articulated by Marx in Book 1 of *Das Capital*: the nature of what is exchanged changes in the course of the exchange itself; the exchange involves the substitution of use-value for an exchange value carried by something which 'symbolises' it and acquires an 'average value' in the market, i.e. money or currency (124). Exchange thus involves three dimensions, a 'cut' (*coupure*), wherein the object exchanged is the 'sign of a lost object' or of a 'lack', the acceptance of this loss, and the circulation of this sign of loss or lack (124). In Michaud's argument, the acceptance of loss and of the code of system which underpins the circulation and exchange of the sign of this loss or lack is equivalent to acceptance of the social and the threshold, so to speak, of social integration. Having moved from the foregrounding of the social function of exchange, through the Marxian account of money as the circulation of the symbol of a lack, Michaud then aligns this account of

social ‘acceptance’ with the Lacanian account of the acquisition of language (124). The constitution of the ‘field of the Other’ (*champ du grand Autre*) is thus the site of the ‘first transference’ and the moment that enables the process of exchange (124-25).

The value of Michaud’s analysis is thus the linking of transference to exchange, on the basis of a Durkheimian account of the ‘transcendental’ function of social exchange as such; Michaud underlines that exchange is not a natural, psychological or psycho-social criterion, but an economic one: exchange is the movement of value as such, and is therefore ‘aligned with’ (*s’apparente à*) transference (124). For transference to operate within the arena of the institution, there must be a process of exchange. Michaud draws on practices and experiences at La Borde as examples of how such exchanges are instigated; the ‘Club’, for example, operates as an alternative economy of a kind, whereby a system or economy of ‘obligation’ is put into effect; the ‘Grid’ proposes a more structured form of exchange according to a machinic logic whereby ‘what obliges’ is not a person or the institution as such, but the grid or the structure itself:

> The law of the grid is to arrive at a system of weighting (*pondération*) such that sometimes an individual is allocated the function of having to accomplish such and such a task not because someone obliges them to do it but because, following the analysis, reduction and account of the various workloads, this task is a ‘remainder’ (*est en reste*) (127).

Informed by the Marxian and Lacanian account of exchange as the circulation of a ‘lack’, and recalling Schotte’s emphasis on the ‘contractual’ aspect of Freud’s term

übertragung, Michaud then moves towards an account of transference at the institutional level as enabled by an 'open system' (127) such as the Grid. As Michaud remarks, this accentuation of the function of loss or lack is what Guattari had called the 'vacuolic function' in the institution, which we might paraphrase as the cultivation and establishment of an empty space, a vacant slot or cavity, valuable evidently not for what it contains, since it contains nothing, but because it is that gap which forces or obliges the system of exchange and transference to move, to circulate.[6] Michaud writes that: 'In reserving a place for this lack, what Guattari calls the "vacuolic function" in the Institution, one allows the latter the expression of demands and the dialectic of desire' (127). This, she argues, is a properly therapeutic aim, the expression of a 'living reality' (127). It may also allow for what she refers to as Guattari's notion of a 'subject desiring at the level of society', that is, a subject able to make certain demands and express a desire of the wider society in which they live, rather than simply continue to exist or survive, within the institution (127). Such a structure of transference at the level of the group, Michard concludes, allows for a framework for the 'relations of transversality which Guattari talks about' (128).

III. Transversality in the Social Field

Within this context of a concerted focus on the conditions and possibility of transference in the institutional setting Guattari's interventions appear markedly different, having a decidedly more political orientation, incorporating elements of social theory drawn loosely from Sartre, and moving towards the experimental character redolent of his later work with Deleuze. 'Transference', an 'exposé to the GTPSI' dated as 1964 appears in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality* and is the first substantial outlining of the new concept of transversality, which would have a fuller

elaboration in Guattari's 'Transversality' essay, his contribution to RDPI1. It is clear from this distribution, from the 'play of the letter', as it were, that transversality arises, at least in part, through a transformation of transference, 'from the inside'. While it often risks dilution as a generalised sense of 'diagonal', as opposed to horizontal or vertical operation, it is more than this: its key sense, as Guattari proposes in the 'glossary' of terms at the end of *Psychananalyse et transversalité*, is a 'modification des données d'acceuil du surmoi' (Guattari 2003a: 288). The published translation renders this as 'modification of the data received by the superego', missing the key sense of 'acceuil' (Guattari 2015b: 79); I would propose an alternative translation: 'a modification of the conditions of acceptance of the superego'. What this brings to light is Guattari's key proposition that the institutional setting and the group dynamics within it allow for a transformation in the way the individual relates to the social field as such, effected through a displacement of the demands of the superego and a different 'marking' of the individual through their inclusion in the group constituted by the institution.

Guattari opens his exposé on transference with an affirmative reminder of Schotte's emphasis on the value of thinking transference within the field of speech, since it enables thinking it outside the 'strict' parameters of the psychoanalytic experience, that is, beyond the couch and in the group or institutional setting, which are also 'structured like a language', Guattari signalling here a broad alignment with Lacanian theory (76). On this basis a parallel may be established between the relation of the subject to language (or in more familiar terms to the Symbolic) and the group's relation to 'its' language. Guattari interweaves Lacanian and Sartrean conceptions here; the opposition between the subjected or dependent group *(groupe assujetti*) and

the subject group (*groupe-sujet*), which Guattari had liberally adapted from Sartre's work of the late 1950s and early 1960s, is set against Lacan's distinction between 'full speech' (*parole pleine*) and 'empty speech' (*parole vide*) (76). It generates questions such as these: can a group be the subject of its own utterance (*énonciation*) (76)? How may a group negotiate a relation to a language or an expression from which it is alienated, or to which it is subjected? One might expect a straightforward equation whereby the group subject speaks 'fully', but Guattari's approach here departs strikingly from what one might expect an orthodox Sartrean response to be. The aim or ideal, in terms of the politics of groups and institutions, is not necessarily the conscious adoption by the group of 'its own language', the full 'subjectivation' of the group through which it takes ownership of its utterances and speaks with its own tongue. Such an option, in Guattari's view, risks blindness to the inevitable non-sense and finitude of the group's own discourse. The starting point, rather, is the relation of the subjected group to the 'non-sense' of its own discourse, the possibility of a 'secret dialogue' between a group and the unconscious sense of the language it is obliged to speak (77). Thus the group subject and the dependent group are not so much different kinds of groups as two poles of reference between which the same group may oscillate. The subjectivity of the group depends on the extent to which it can 'assume' its own finitude, the non-sense which inevitably conditions it. Guattari suggests that a 'potential alterity' (*alterité potentiel*) may emerge from this condition of linguistic alienation (76). The generative questions here are not so much 'what do we think, what do we want and what shall we say' as 'what does "it think" about all of this around us'? (*qu'est-ce que ça pense de tout cela autour de nous*), the ungrammaticality of my English rendering hinting at the displacement of the speaking and thinking subject (the Cartesian cogito) that is at stake (Guattari 2015b: 77/53). In

a cruder formulation, the question may come out as 'What the fuck are we doing here?' (*qu'est-ce qu'on fout là?*) (Guattari 2015b: 77/53, translation modified); such a questioning brings to the fore the finitude of the group as such. Rather than conceiving of the subjected and subjectivated group as mutually exclusive, then, Guattari outlines the opportunity for a 'potential subjective cut' (*coupure potential subjective*) in the relation of a group to the 'non-sense' of its language and to the unconscious message of which this non-sense or empty speech is a symptom (Guattari 2015b: 77/53). Within this somewhat elaborate and formulaic proposition is a radical conception of the potential of marginalised, excluded or otherwise precarious groups to become the vehicles of political change. The Lacanian terms are not, however, mere theoretical signposts: they allow and prepare for the conception of transversality as a mode of 'cutting things differently', which is key to Guattari's reconfiguration of the concept and of his emerging theoretical practice. The 'secret dialogue' of the group with the non-significance of its speech also allows for an avoidance of the 'group fantasms' specific to the subjected group and the subjectivated group, of the 'neurotic' group as a defence against external forces, in the first instance, and the 'mad direction' (*tangent folle*), or potential despotism of the subject group (Guattari 2015b: 77-78/54).

The 'exposé to the GTPSI' on transference thus lays the foundations for the fuller exposition of transversality in the RDP1 essay. Again Guattari's starting point is that institutional psychotherapy has to be thought and practiced as focused on a 'real social problematic', rather than in isolation; the 'pressure of the social signifier' on the individual is there all the time and at all levels; the social relation is thus not 'beyond' the individual and familial level, or beyond or outside the institution itself,

but within it (Guattari 2015c: 102). It is there ‘in all psycho-pathological incidences’ and appears all the more acutely when it comes to the apparently ‘desocialised’ syndromes of psychosis (103). This is a clear precursor to the opening of *Anti-Œdipus*, and to the programmatic proposition that ‘there is only desire and social, and nothing else’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 42).

As we have seen Guattari also draws from Sartre’s distinction between the ‘group in fusion’ and his critique of the serial organisation of individuals in the social field so as to elaborate a structural opposition between the ‘vertical’, pyramidal or hierarchical axis of relations in the institution, whereby a small group usually of doctors and managers retain real power in the institution, and the serial or horizontal relations, usually of nurses, assistants and patients, where exchange is more common, but power is lacking. Transversality is intended precisely to break this opposition, and enable circulation and exchange across the institution as a whole. The key question is thus not so much the instigation of transversality as such, but that of the promotion of greater ‘degrees’ or co-efficients of transversality, and in Guattari’s account this degree of mobility is particularly focused on the issue of speech, on who can speak and under what conditions.

In the same vein of interpreting the symptoms of psychosis as a problem at the social level Guattari postulates a parallel between the ‘slippage’ (*glissement*) of meaning in the speech of schizophrenics and the growing ‘discordance’ occasioned by the social ideal of the individual as a machine for production and consumption, a precursor of the desiring machines of *Anti-Œdipus* (Guattari 2015c: 106). The psychotic symptom, for example the ‘silence of the catatonic’ is a premonitory response to the ideal

conjured by the neo-capitalist technocratic state; here Guattari valorises the therapeutic and critical role of speech over the 'written system' of the technocratic state machine (106). If, in other words, the technocratic order reduces the space of speech in the idealisation of the individual as a producing-consuming machine, the institution can be experimentally reconfigured as a space in which speech can be exchanged and circulate.

Guattari thus overlays the Sartrean dinstinction between dependent groups and subject groups with a Lacanian-inflected account of the function of speech at the group level. The subject group speaks and is heard, it 'makes a statement' (*il énonce quelque chose*) or is the 'subject of (an) enunciation', whereas for the dependent group, 'its cause is heard' (*sa cause est entendue)*, but this hearing is lost for the group itself, in an infinite serialisation (107). The 'work' or task of the subject group is to speak, and speech is its power.

However, this is not a straightforwardly Sartrean advocation of the need and the value of a 'prise de parole'. Guattari complicates and enriches the picture with the Freudian distinction between the manifest and latent content of speech. It is in the 'latent content' of the group's discourse, embodied in the 'ruptures of meaning' in the group's discourse, where the unconscious desire of the group may be found (108). It is in a psychoanalytic attentiveness to the signifying accidents and elements of incoherence that space may be 'cleared' for the further exploration of the group's desire and its becoming (109). It is thus important that the 'non-sense' of the group's speech not be constitutively excluded through a 'rigid mechanism', that it not be 'territorialised' (an early use of a term which will gain far greater currency in *Anti-*

Œdipus) (111). Accordingly, Guattari emphasises that the analytic attention to what happens in the group's discourse and at its edges predominates over any orientation towards a 'cure', or forms of 'psycho-social engineering' (110). It is at a stage prior to the sedimention or hardening of dynamics within the group, and outside ritual consideration of 'terms of reference' that this process should function, since such a territorialisation would close off 'the possibility of every saying anything real', a possibility which for Guattari is equivalent to the consideration of problems at the wider social and human level (110). The group must thus be considered as open to the non-sense of its own discourse, and it is here that the oscillation between the 'two poles of reference' of the subjected and the subject group comes into play. It is at the level of this concern with its own finitude and non-sense that the desire of the group, thus the point at which it engages with the real, may be discerned. The 'political group' which does nothing but mourn the loss of its effectiveness occasioned by historical shifts in the social field, expresses nothing but its own death-wish (110). In a similar vein, the dominant group of the director, managers and doctors in the psychiatric hospital 'blocks any expression of the desire of the groups of human beings of which the institution is composed' (110). If, then, a space is open for the speech of the group (here considered at the level of the institution as a whole) the first aim of group analysis is a 'particular mode of interpretation' (111), but not that effected by a particular individual adopting the role of the analyst. One of the key modifications to the psychoanalytic model of transference is the re-distribution of the role of the interpreter or analyst, which, as opposed to its formal structuring in the analyst-analysand duo, is varied across the group and conditional on the emergence of the fault-lines in the group's discourse. Guattari writes that 'The interpretation may well be given by the idiot of the ward if he is able to make his voice heard at the right

time, the time when a particular signifier becomes active at the level of the structure as a whole, for instance in organising a game of hop-scotch' (111). The 'power' of the psychiatrist or of any other individual or group of individuals within the institution, if it is not varied and redistributed across the group as a whole, risks 'destroying the possibilities of expression of the institutions unconscious subjectivity' (111), and, moreover, pasting it back into the persistence of a class order.

This redistribution and variation of the different roles within the institution is one of the key results of the 'operation'of transversality; it provokes a rupture in the hierarchical concentration of power which blocks the articulation or enunciation of desire; it is a transformation of the operational and organisational diagram or 'organigramme' of the institution, which modifies the 'conditions of acceptance of the superego' (112). It must nevertheless be effected 'from the summit to the base' (113). If there are greater 'degrees of transversality' at the base level, that is, among the nurses, assistants and patients, than among the directors and doctors, the schism between the two levels and the pyramidal diagram, narrower and more focused at the top, is such that this mobility and exchange have limited effect on the institution as a whole. What is necessary is a 'structural redefinition of each person's role and a re-orientation of the whole institution', an adjustment of its diagrammatic plan (113).

It is this kind of thorough restructuring of the institutional space and organisation of the institution which can permit the 'modification of the conditions of the superego' of which Guattari conceives. However, this modification does not imply a straightforward resolution of social anxiety or any kind of 'resolution' of the demands placed by the superego on the individual; modification is the key term. Guattari draws

on Freud to underline the point that the 'internal' anxieties of the subject cannot be thought separately from the 'signifying logic' of a particular social framework (105). Why, Freud had asked, do anxieties persist beyond the disappearance of the external 'situations of danger' which provoked them? The reason Freud gives is that the external danger is 'actually evoked and determined by an instinctual internal danger' (104). The internal anxiety comes first, and the threat that it conjurs, of castration and punishment, cannot be done away with: 'there can be no end to the threat of castration which will continually reactivate what Freud calls the "unconscious need for punishment"' (104). The social field, or the 'working of the social signifier' is thus 'irreversibly' caught up in the dynamics of castration and punishment (104). Thus for Guattari, again, the castration complex must be thought as embedded in the social field, rather than constrained within the Oedipal family. There is little point conceiving, from this point of view, of a 'successful' integration into society through a resolution of the Oedipus complex, since the persistence of anxiety, 'must be linked with the dependence of the individual on the collectivity described by Freud' (105).

The model of the Oedipal family and in particular the symbolic role of the father has become progressively incompatible with a social order which functions effectively through the 'signifying machine of the economic system' (105). The term *machine* is crucial here, and points to other arguments in Guattari's early work around historical and epistemic shifts in the positioning of the subject in relation to the machine. Guattari's concerns here may also be seen to prefigure later development in the work of Foucault, towards a historical relativisation of the operations of power. 'No modern Oedipus', Guattari proposes, will guide 'the real subjectivity of modern States', even though this remains 'unconscious and [like Œdipus himself] blind' (106). Castration

anxiety persists beyond any solution at the level of the nuclear (or other) family, in other words. What is really at stake, then, is the problematic of the integration of the individual into the social group. The reconfigured institution provides an experimental space whereby the conditions of acceptance of the individual by the group may be transformed, and its unconscious operation brought to the fore.

If the transversalised institution thus allows for an experimental, and necessarily transitory modification of the demands placed on the individual, the individual is no less transformed by their inclusion in the group. Guattari puts thus in terms redolent of initiation rites in anthropological contexts: 'We are here in the presence of a similar mechanism to that which is found in the rites of passage or primitive societies when initiating or welcoming into the culture a sub-group that has come of age' (Guattari 2015b: 79). Similarly, the possibilities of 'creative intervention' arise when the 'initiators' of such an intervention are able to occupy the place where 'it ought to be able to speak', insofar as they take on a mode of existence 'marked by the signifier of the group' (Guattari 2015c: 115, translation modified). What Guattari envisages here is a 'marking' whereby the individual 'assumes a 'certain mode of castration' in order to speak with or as the group (115). Individual subjectivity and finitude is exchanged, or perhaps sacrificed, for group subjectivity and for the finitude of the group. Thus, while Guattari bemoans the risk of IP 'foundering' into a 'besotting "mythology" of togetherness', the group may nevertheless offer: 'the most detailed picture of human finitude, in which every undertaking of mine is taken from me in the name of a demand more implacable than my own death – that of being caught up in the existence of that other who alone guarantees what reaches me via human speech' (118).

Conclusion

Transversality, as elaborated by Guattari in these early texts, and whose baseline conditions I have tried to outline, thus occupies the terrain between therapeutic transference according to the analytic model, and a more fundamental shift in the conception of the relation of the subject to the social field. If in Guattari's later work, especially in his work with Deleuze, transversality operates at a level below or across the individual, here it remains embedded, partially at least, in a therapeutic and organisational pragmatics where it is the existential capacity of the psychotic individual, to speak and to desire (albeit in a mode 'marked' by the subjectivity and the desire of the group) which is at stake. What I hope to have done is at least to have staked out an implicit demand for more work to be done to connect this ethos with the later lines of flight of Guattari's philosophy. This work would to a large extent involve a historical and archival attention to the specific sites of IP and the lived experience of individuals and institutions at the time of its emergence. It would also involve attention to the ways in which the existential and therapeutic aims of the concept and practice of transversality are attenuated through their integration into a philosophy which abandons the individual as a point of reference. But this is not simply or not only a call for a work of intellectual history which would focus on an underestimated period and context, but a pragmatic and therapeutic aim in itself, which might bring into relief something of the unrealised promise of Guattari's ethos of transversality for a contemporary consciousness of our sclerotic and hierarchical institutional structures.

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[1] *Psychanalyse et transversalité* was originally published by François Maspero in 1972, and reprinted by La Découverte in 2003. A translation by Rosemary Sheed of 'La Tranversalité' appeared in the 1984 collection *Molecular Revolution*, prefaced by David Cooper. This same translation appears in the 2015 Semiotexte translation of the entirety of *Psychanalyse et transversalité*. The 'Index of General Themes' does not appear in either of the translated volumes, however. I refer to the French version here. Further references to the original French versions, alongside translations, will be given in the format: Guattari 2015b: 77/53, where the second page reference is to the French version (see Bibliography for full details).

[2] See Glowczweski 2011 for an account of Guattari's relation to anthropology, and the fascinating proposition of a parallel between the forms of kinship or 'meta-kinship' practiced among Australasian and other Aboriginals and the institutional collectives such as that at La Borde (103).

[3] See Dosse 2011, 50 for the claim that Ginette Michaud 'came up with' the concept of transversality and 'discussed it' with Guattari. Thank you to Anthony Faramelli for the note about Polack.

[4] Guattari's important post-1968 intervention 'Students, the Mad and the Delinquent' was also first given as a paper at the 1968 international Psychodrama conference in Baden Baden. In a discussion with Oury included in *Psychoanalaysis and Transversality*, however, Guattari stipulates the need for institutional psychotherapy to differentiate itself from the 'giant farce' of the 'mystified circuit of the little group' (Guattari 2015a, 35), including psychodrama in this critique.

[5] See Lacan 2015. Other papers by Lacan are also crucial points of reference, particularly 'The Function and Field of Speech in Psychoanalysis' (see Lacan 2007). Lacan's *Écrits*, in which this text is included, would not be published until 1966, however, and the seminar on ethics would not be published until much later although Tosquelles, Schotte, Oury and many other GTPSI adherents would have attended, and unofficial transcriptions were in circulation.

[6] There is a plausible echo here of Lévi-Strauss's reading of *mana* in Mauss's work as a 'floating signifier', which feeds into Lacan's conception of the *objet a*, as the signifier which 'lacks in its place' (*manque à sa place*). See Lévi-Strauss 1987: 63 and Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan, the Absolute Master*, chapter 6.